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Specialization and Trade

439 Among the more distinctive features of upper Xingú culture are community craft specialization and a widespread system of trade re-
[438] lationships. The Trumaí traded among themselves, but the most important exchanges took place on the intertribal level, and it is here that the products of tribal specialization become significant to the economy.
[182] At the time of Quain's investigations, the Arawakans maintained a
[323] monopoly on pottery, but the once active Trumaí stone axe manu-
[317] facture had fallen into disuse. In its place, the Trumaí were specializing in the preparation of salt, obtained by burning a species of water-lily and sifting the ashes. The Trumaí depended on the Kamayurá for a
[411] highly prized type of bow, as the proper wood was not found in their territory. According to Oberg, this black, rectangular bow was eagerly sought by other tribes, also.[20]

While the Kamayurá monopoly on these bows can be explained by the local availability of the raw materials, craft specialization cannot be looked upon simply as a function of the exclusive possession of certain skills. Other arts diffused rapidly among the tribes, and it is evident that the specialties remained such for non-economic reasons. For example, the three Arawakan tribes, the Mehinaku, Kustenaú and Waurá, all made pottery, but each traded their wares only with certain tribes. The Bacairí obtained their pottery from the Kustenaú, who were, in von den Steinen's time, their neighbors on the Batoví River. On the Kuliseu, the Nahukwa traded for ceramics with the nearby Mehinaku, while the Tupian-speaking tribes and the Trumaí relied on the Waurá. Despite the fact that each Arawakan tribe dealt with its nearest neighbors, the exclusiveness of these relationships is not a physical necessity.
[602] The Trumaí could have obtained Mehinaku pottery. They had many
[881] kinship ties with the Mehinaku, and even conducted joint puberty rites. The distance between them was not great. Manifestly some standardized channeling of trade relationships existed.

This is further confirmed by the confinement of pottery manufacture to the Arawakans. It is probable that when the various groups first settled in the area, the Arawakans were the only ceramicists. With the development of close intertribal relationships, however, there was every opportunity for the craft to diffuse. It could have been learned by outsiders in trips to Arawakan villages and then practiced at home, as the clay is easily gotten from the river bottoms. Obvious means for its diffusion were marriage or capture of Arawakan women. But the manufacture of pottery was not observed by Quain in any non-Arawakan
village of the area, despite the fact that Arawakan women were living
[303] in many such communities. In the Trumaí village no pottery was made,

[20] Oberg 1953, p. 30.

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occasionally someone, who was occupied or in bad temper, would chase the child away or slap him lightly. The only time that Quain ever saw a child given physical punishment was after some petty pilfering. In this case the father whipped him angrily across the legs. Usually, however, only a verbal reprimand followed misconduct.

Children were in a somewhat privileged category. With respect to gift-giving, the claims of the young were particularly strong, although, as noted above, they were not unlimited. When a child wanted something, it would either be given it or a good excuse would be offered. Parents backed up such demands, and were hurt and aggrieved if the request was refused.

Children had almost as strong control over their property as did the older Trumaí. Quain dealt directly with the children to secure specimens of children's playthings. The children manifested the same possessiveness as their parents in these dealings and in their general concepts of property. Even little Katsits cried when her father wanted to put up her necklace in the trade game. Her father let her keep the necklace and sought other objects to exchange.

Children cried frequently, and their tears rarely went unheeded. Teasing by adults was common, but when a child broke into full and lusty howls, he was soothed and comforted. There were no admonitions against crying itself. The only time a child was reprimanded for crying was when it was absolutely unwarranted and annoying to the adults. In such cases, a stern voice was all that was required. By the time a boy reached the age of ten he rarely wept, for he was then going through the initial phases of the puberty rites, and courage and fortitude were expected.

Little work was demanded of children. The boys often accompanied the women on gathering expeditions, but this was the only help they gave them. On the other hand, they were frequently called on to perform errands for the men or lend them some small aid. These tasks were done willingly.

The older boys occasionally accompanied the men on hunting and fishing trips, thus learning the necessary subsistence techniques. They participated actively in fish poisoning, helped in the preparation and application of the *tawasi* bark, and in the gathering of the drugged fish. Of all the subsistence techniques, horticulture was the last to be learned. The youngest Trumaí to have a garden was Autsuki, who was going through the final stages of the puberty ceremonies. Maibu's foster son, Jawaku, was still considered too young to cultivate his own plot, although he was no more than two years younger than Autsuki. Most of the boys were well acquainted with the work, however, through trailing the men to the gardens and watching them.

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upon his parents cohabiting; and they immediately told everyone in the village.

Puberty Rites

Male puberty rites were divided into two periods. The first, which was preparatory, covered about three or four years and consisted of the administration of certain medicines (*okeis*) and body-scraping. The second covered a much shorter period and constituted the actual initiation of the boy into the men's group. The observances, starting when a boy was between ten and twelve years of age, increased in frequency and intensity until his final initiation. The purposes, as expressed by the Trumaí, were to make him grow big and strong, give him courage and fortitude, and mark certain achievements on the road to manhood.

Body-scraping was one of the most important means used to accomplish these ends. Two different types of scarification instruments were in use. One was a sort of comb made of fish teeth imbedded in wood; the other was a polished armadillo claw. The former was used during the early phases of scarification, the latter, during the late phases when the whole body was scraped.

The first scraping was limited to the arms or legs. Kamkuti received his initial scarification on the biceps as an aftermath of shooting his first fish. The scraping, painful though it was, was a reward and a recognition of manly achievement. It was also a test of endurance and resistance to pain, and the boy was admonished against flinching or weeping. Such occasions were the first on which the child was exhorted to be manly and courageous.

When the boy reached biological puberty, the scraping became more severe. Arms, legs, flanks, chest, back, and stomach were all scraped, and the operation must have been most painful. Each boy could expect to have this happen to him a few times during the course of his initiation. Jawaku, Maibu's foster-son, had his first overall scarification while Quain was in residence. This was a prelude to the full initiation rites, through which he was soon to pass. Jawaku was a very timid boy, and significantly lacked the assertiveness that was so much a part of Trumaí personality. Katauka, who was officiating, scraped his legs first, then his back, flanks and arms, ending with a light treatment on his chest and stomach. Jawaku looked extremely unhappy, but he did not cry until Katauka began scraping his back. Maibu held him firmly and told him not to cry, while others scolded him for being a baby.

Before the scarification started Jawaku's body was moistened with water from a nearby pot. After it was finished, Katauka rubbed him completely with the bark of the *arupakaiem* tree. This or the bark of the *ñit'a* tree (the source of the fish poison previously referred to) were always used to treat the wounds made by scraping.

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always used to treat the wounds made by scraping. Jawaku walked away in a hurt and angry mood, his body covered with blood.

A few days later, in recognition of his advancement, Jawaku made the afternoon serving of food to the assembled men, a custom associated with the *ole* (manioc) ceremony. A further sign of his new position was the drinking of an herbaceous emetic before eating the first *piquí* fruit. Only boys who had not yet had their stomachs scraped could eat *piquí* without first taking the medicine.

One important purpose of body-scraping, the Trumaí thought, was to make the boy grow and give him strength. For this reason even the adult males occasionally scraped their arms. The scars themselves were very much admired. Of still greater value was the size of the muscles of the arms, chest, shoulder, and back of the neck, which the Trumaí believed to be the result of the scraping.

Another method of inducing growth was by drinking medicines made from herbs. All of the upper Xingú peoples were said to know of these preparations. The Suyá were said to have learned to make them also, but not the Yuruna. Adults drank these medicines, but they were especially important during the final phase of the puberty rites.

The perforation of the ear lobes was a distinct and separate part of the cycle of puberty rites, and the only one in which the boys went through a prescribed phase as a group. This observance took place during the equinoctial festive period which follows the rainy season and involved intertribal participation. At the next dry season festival, Quain was told, all the boys would have their ears pierced. Jawaku's ears, however, had been pierced before, whereas Autsuki, who was older and had entered the puberty cycle earlier, had not yet had his ears perforated. Manifestly, the time of the first perforation varied.

At the first piercing the young boy added the name of his mother's father to the name of his paternal grandfather, which he had been given previously. This was also an occasion for scarifying the arms.

Quain was informed that ear-piercing was done by all the upper Xingú area tribes. The Suyá, in common with other Gê-speaking peoples, made very large, and to the Trumaí, very unsightly, perforations in the lobes. Two Trumaí men who had been Suyá captives had such perforations and also pierced lower lips. The latter condition explained satisfactorily to the Trumaí why the Suyá "cannot speak properly."

The puberty ceremonies were climaxed by a final series of tests of strength and courage: wrestling with a small anaconda, a subsequent intensive drinking of *okeis*, and further body-scraping. After this the boy was kept in seclusion until his ears were again pierced.

Both Jawaku and Autsuki were at this stage. One day a snake was located in the lagoon, and Jawaku was urged to go after it. He and Makurawa ran through the brush to the lagoon and searched for it along

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the banks, while men crowded into a canoe. The reptile was located, but instead of the one-foot diameter that it was at first said to have, it turned out to be only three inches thick. But, as Quain laconically observed, it was hungry. The men shouted at Jawaku to jump in the water and grab it.

The boy approached the reptile cautiously and with obvious fear. The anaconda, aroused, slithered through the water to the other side of the lagoon. Jawaku's unwillingness to fight was now apparent. There were shouts that he was frightened. These goads temporarily overcame his reluctance, and he waded through the water and grabbed the snake around the middle, lifting it out of the water. The anaconda began throwing its coils, while striking at the boy. In a panic, Jawaku stumbled blindly for the shore, tripped over a log, and released his hold on the snake. All the men shouted, "He's afraid!" as the crestfallen boy dragged himself out of the water and silently walked home.

That night, Maibu made a lengthy speech in which he absolved himself from any responsibility for Jawaku's cowardice. The next day another reptile was sighted, but Jawaku did not even bother to look at it.

On the other hand, Autsuki measured up to what was expected of him, and thus was able to continue the ritual that marked his maturation. Immediately upon the successful outcome of his struggle with an anaconda, he went to his house. He had now entered the seclusion phase of his puberty rites. Tun, his mother's brother, who was acting as next of kin, built a partition screening him off from the rest of the house. He was allowed nothing to eat but a medicinal preparation called *wyryx*, and he could leave his confinement to defecate only when everyone was asleep.

The seclusion period was to last until the ear-piercing festival which was to be held several months later, but Autsuki was cheerful about it. In accordance with normal practice, he had his arms scraped shortly after he entered confinement, and he was also given the adult tonsure.

There remained only one more step in the cycle of initiation rites: initiation into the shamanistic art of curing. Completion of this final phase was necessary for full participation in the men's circle and for the privilege of smoking tobacco.[3] All of the uninitiated Trumaí youths knew how to smoke and occasionally did so, but the adults referred to this as "lying smoking." In order to "really" smoke it was necessary to have a ceremony performed by Matiwana. Exactly when this occurred is open to question, but ideally it was supposed to follow the final seclusion and ear-piercing. Aloari had not yet had the ceremony performed, although he was married and had a child. In his own words, he was still "too young." Aloari was evidently equating maturation with the puberty rites.

[3] Oberg (1953, p. 60) reports that uninitiated men may not smoke among the Kamayurá, either.

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Changes in status and expected behavior were connected with the transition to manhood, and new modes of participation in the culture were open to the young man. It is necessary, however, to differentiate between the transition consequent upon increased age and that which resulted specifically from passage through the life crisis rites. Ideally, such a distinction should not have existed, as the achievement of physical maturity should have been heralded by the socio — religious observances. But there were two young married men, Yanahi and Aloari, who had not completed the ritual — the former because of disinclination, the latter due to the delay caused by his captivity among the Yuruna. Aloari, although both vocal and aggressive, and having the men's haircut, was definitely not one of the men's group yet. His smoking was only of the "lying" kind. He still needed the ritual admittance to the smoking group. Yanahi, on the other hand, still had the youthful haircut, but, for unknown reasons, was already a full-fledged member of the men's group. He was frequently seen with the adolescent boys, however, and his activities were characterized by a youthful lack of gravity. His history shows that there was no sudden break with boyhood among the Trumaí. The puberty rites were spread over a long enough time to allow a slow incorporation into the adult world.

Upon reaching man's estate, the young man became an integral part of the household and village economies. To be sure, property attitudes had been developed early, but he now had a greater opportunity to express them, inasmuch as he was able to participate in the upper Xingú trade system and thus accumulate more personal possessions. His entrance into the men's circle gave him a larger voice in community affairs, but at the same time it involved him in many village squabbles, which were intensified by his search for sexual partners or a wife. Also, among his added responsibilities was the defense of the village.

In short, the status of the newly arrived man brought greater economic independence and a fuller participation in the social and ceremonial life of the community. In return for his heightened importance he was expected to act with sobriety and self-reliance, to show courage and fortitude, and to be more aggressive in asserting his new rights and prerogatives. This last was largely a matter of degree, for Quain had been impressed at the extent to which children asserted themselves and shared the mannerisms and attitudes of adults.

Female Puberty

The only data available on female puberty observances concern the first menses (*wasipanes*), when the girl is confined for a period during which she wears her hair over her face. Rodrigues Ferreira, in commenting on a Trumaí girl in seclusion, states that she must remain in her

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compartment in the house for six months, at the end of which time she is accepted as a young woman.[3]

Menstruation caused no special distress to the Trumaí women. They maintained personal cleanliness with the aid of leaves, going out into the brush behind the house to care for themselves. Although the relevant taboos were observed, the women talked frankly to Quain about menstruation, and were interested in learning what white women did during the period. The men, although expressing a fear of menstrual blood, did not shun the subject either. Most of them knew when women in the village were having their menses.

Everyone was extremely shocked when Quain told them that white people often had intercourse during the menstrual period, for such contact would make a Trumaí man fall ill and die. Aloari said that he would surely die of a cough if he copulated with his wife then. The blood itself was considered malignant, infecting whatever it touched. The whole village became very disturbed when Kuyafi dropped some menstrual blood on the path to the gardens. Aloari averred that he would not go for manioc until the rain washed it away.

Fear of polluting forced a menstruating woman to make frequent trips to the weeds, where nobody walked. The danger also extended to her person. During this time she was not allowed to cook, although she could sit around the fire when food was being prepared. (Quain's departure from the Trumaí village was delayed for a day as both the wife and sister-in-law of Aloari, who was to accompany him, were menstruating, and there was only one woman left in the household to make his *beijú* supply.) Nor could the menstruating woman carry water or take a bath. However, a prohibition on eating fish was the only food taboo that she had to observe.

Marriage

A man was ready to seek a mate within one or two years after his initiation, or at the corresponding age level. Women were suitable prospects soon after their puberty rites. It was common for marriages to be arranged by parents while their children were still infants. These infant betrothals were usually between cross-cousins. It is doubtful, however, whether many such arranged marriages were consummated, both because of the high mortality and the fact that most of the Trumaí women were ultimately fought for and won by verbal battles in the men's circle.

Courtships were neither long nor formalized. When a man developed an interest in a woman, he usually expressed it by attempting to seduce her. In most instances, amorous advances were made without any in-

[3] Rodrigues Ferreira 1946, p. 92.